

RECEIVED
CENTRAL FAX CENTER

OCT 17 2006

In the Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A self return lid assembly for selectively sealing a container comprising:

a cap having a self-gripping handle, a top face, a sip port and a vent port integrally formed in the top face, and a generally circular outer peripheral rim;

a release lever detachably pivotally coupled to said cap about a pivot point and moveable between a sealed configuration and an unsealed configuration, said pivot point being disposed outside said generally circular outer peripheral rim, said release lever having a thumb pad on a first side of the pivot point and a sip plug and a vent plug on a second side of the pivot point, the second side of said release lever is fork-shaped having two arms, wherein the vent plug and the sip plug each extend from the distal end of one of each arm, and the sip plug sealing the sip port independently of the vent plug sealing the vent port in said sealed configuration; and

a biasing mechanism operatively coupled to said cap and said release lever, said biasing mechanism urging said release lever to said sealed configuration through application of an upward force on an underside of said release lever, whereby said unsealed configuration is achieved by applying force between the thumb pad and the self-gripping handle.

2. (Original) The self return teeter tauter lid assembly as recited in claim 1 further comprising a container having a container opening coupled to said cap, wherein said cap selectively coupled to said container so as to cover said container opening.

3. (Currently Amended) The self return teeter tauter lid assembly as recited in claim 1 [[having a rim encompassing the outer perimeter of the top face and the self-gripping handle extending peripherally therefrom]], wherein [[the]] said outer peripheral rim has an upper portion and a lower portion, the upper portion forming a basin in said sealed configuration with the top face, and the lower portion configured for coupling to a container.

4. (Original) The self return teeter tauter lid assembly as recited in claim 3 wherein the lower portion configured having a detachable snap-fit engagement for coupling to a container.

5. (Original) The self return teeter tauter lid assembly as recited in claim 1 wherein the sip port permits a fluid to pass there through in said unsealed configuration, the vent port permits a gas to pass there through in said unsealed configuration.

6. (Original) The self return teeter tauter lid assembly as recited in claim 1 wherein said release lever having protruding pins at the pivot point is slideably receivable in the pin holes of the grooves integrally formed in the self-gripping handle.

7. (Previously Presented) The self return teeter tauter lid assembly as recited in claim 1 wherein the fork-shaped second side of said release lever is substantially crescent-shaped.

8. (Previously Presented) The self return teeter tauter lid assembly as recited in claim 1 wherein said biasing mechanism includes a spring, and said release lever comprises a shaft aligning the pivot point and retaining the spring in an assembled position.

9. (Currently Amended) A self return teeter tauter lid assembly for selectively sealing a container comprising:

a cap having a self-gripping handle, a top face, an outer peripheral rim, a sip port and a vent port integrally formed in the top face; and

a release lever detachably pivotally coupled to said cap about a pivot point and moveable between a sealed configuration and an unsealed configuration, said release lever having integrally formed therein: a spring, a thumb pad on a first side of the pivot point and a sip plug and a vent plug on a second side of the pivot point; the sip plug sealing the sip port in said sealed configuration, the vent plug sealing the vent port in said sealed configuration; the integral spring of said release lever resiliently engages

said cap, wherein the spring urges said release lever to said sealed configuration through application of an upward force on an underside of said release lever, whereby said unsealed configuration is achieved by applying force between the thumb pad and the self-gripping handle;

wherein said pivot point is disposed outwardly said outer peripheral rim of said cap.

10. (Original) The self return teeter tauter lid assembly as recited in claim 9 further comprising a container having a container opening coupled to said cap, wherein said cap selectively coupled to said container so as to cover said container opening.

11. (Original) The self return teeter tauter lid assembly as recited in claim 9 having a rim encompassing the outer perimeter of the top face and the self-gripping handle extending peripherally therefrom, wherein the rim has an upper portion and a lower portion, the upper portion forming a basin in said sealed configuration with the top face, and the lower portion configured for coupling to a container.

12. (Original) The self return teeter tauter lid assembly as recited in claim 11 wherein the lower portion configured having a detachable snap-fit engagement for coupling to a container.

13. (Original) The self return teeter tauter lid assembly as recited in claim 9 wherein the sip port permits a fluid to pass there through in said unsealed configuration, the vent port permits a gas to pass there through in said unsealed configuration.

14. (Original) The self return teeter tauter lid assembly as recited in claim 9 wherein said release lever having protruding pins at the pivot point is slideably receivable in the pin holes of the grooves integrally formed in the self-gripping handle.

15. (Previously Presented) The self return teeter tauter lid assembly as recited in claim 9 wherein the second side of said release lever is fork-shaped having two arms, wherein the vent plug and the sip plug are coupled to the distal end of each arm.

16. (Currently Amended) A self return teeter tauter lid assembly for selectively sealing a container comprising:

a cap, said cap having integrally formed therein: a spring, a self-gripping handle, a top face, a sip port and a vent port integrally formed in the top face;

a release lever detachably pivotally coupled to said cap about a pivot point, which is disposed beyond an outer periphery of said top face and moveable between a sealed configuration and an unsealed configuration, said release lever having a thumb pad on a first side of the pivot point and a sip plug and a vent plug on a second side of the pivot point; the sip plug sealing the sip port in said sealed configuration, the vent plug sealing the vent port in said sealed configuration; the integral spring of said cap resiliently engages said release lever, wherein the spring urges said release lever to said sealed configuration, whereby said unsealed configuration is achieved by applying force between the thumb pad and the self-gripping handle.

17. (Original) The self return teeter tauter lid assembly as recited in claim 16 further comprising a container having a container opening coupled to said cap, wherein said cap selectively coupled to said container so as to cover said container opening.

18. (Original) The self return teeter tauter lid assembly as recited in claim 16 having a rim encompassing the outer perimeter of the top face and the self-gripping handle extending peripherally therefrom, wherein the rim has an upper portion and a lower portion, the upper portion forming a basin in said sealed configuration with the top face, and the lower portion configured for coupling to a container.

19. (Original) The self return teeter tauter lid assembly as recited in claim 18 wherein the lower portion configured having a detachable snap-fit engagement for coupling to a container.

20. (Original) The self return teeter tauter lid assembly as recited in claim 16 wherein the sip port permits a fluid to pass there through in said unsealed configuration, the vent port permits a gas to pass there through in said unsealed configuration.

21. (Original) The self return teeter tauter lid assembly as recited in claim 16 wherein said release lever having protruding pins at the pivot point is slideably receivable in the pin holes of the grooves integrally formed in the self-gripping handle.

22. (Previously Presented) The self return teeter tauter lid assembly as recited in claim 16 wherein the second side of said release lever is fork-shaped having two arms, wherein the vent plug and the sip plug are coupled to the distal end of each arm.